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New Pāli Inscriptions from South-east Asia

I. A RECENTLY DISCOVERED PĀLI INSCRIPTION FROM NAKHON PATHOM*

In October 1991 the Institute of Western Thai Culture, Silpakorn University, held an exhibition on "The Archaeological Sites in Western Thailand" at the Sanamchandra Palace, Nakhon Pathom. The exhibition catalogue included a brief note, in Thai and English, accompanied by photographs, on a "New inscription found from Dvāravatī site in Western Thailand".¹ A reading of the inscription, with a Thai translation, was published in the same year by Naiyana Prongthura *et al.*, with larger and clearer plates.² According to the latter, the inscription was presented to Silpakorn University, Sanamchandra Palace Campus, by the abbot of Wat Taku (Amphoe Muang, Nakhon Pathom) in BE 2532 [CE 1989]. The abbot received it from a villager from district Nakhon Chaisi (Nakhon Pathom province); no further details regarding the nature of the find-spot or the date of discovery are available.

* An earlier version of this article was published under the title "Preliminary Report on a Recently Discovered Pāli Inscription" in the *Journal of the Office of the Supreme Patriarch's Secretary (Warasanchotmaikhao Samnaklekhanukansomdetphrasangharat)*, Vol. I, No. 1, (2535 [1992]), pp. 83–86. The earlier version was based only on the "exhibition catalogue" (see n. 1); the present revision takes into account the work of Naiyana *et al.* (see n. 2), and gives an improved reading of the inscription and some additional references.

¹ Phasook Indrawooth *et al.*, *Laeng boranakhadi nai phumiphak tawantok / The Archaeological Sites in Western Thailand*, Silpakorn University Press, Nakhon Pathom, 1991, pp. 112–13 and Pl. 67.

² Naiyana Prongthura *et al.*, "An inscription on a rectangular bar in the Pallava script in the Cultural Project Centre, Silpakorn University, Sanamchandra Palace Campus, Nakhon Pathom" (in Thai), in *Phasa-Charuk*, Part 3, published in celebration of the sixth cycle of Prof. Dr. Prasert Na Nagara, Silpakorn University, Bangkok, 2534 [1991], pp. 40–44.

The text is neatly engraved in ornate Pallava characters on a rectangular stone bar measuring 30.7 by 5.2 cm., with two lines on each of the four long sides. The exhibition catalogue dates the inscription to the 12th century BE [*circa* 550–650 CE], and notes that it bears “the essence of the Buddha’s Teaching: Ariyasacca (The Four Noble Truths) and Paṭiccasamuppāda (The Law of Causation)”. Naiyana dates the inscription to the 12–13th century BE [*circa* 550–750 CE].

1. Transcription

The transcription given here follows the order in which the photographs occur in the exhibition catalogue and that given by Naiyana *et al.*, with the four sides of the bar numbered from A to D.

- A.1. *śrī // dukkha samudaya nirodha magga avijjā saṃkhāra viññāṇa nāmarūpa*
 A.2. *salāyatana phassa vedanā taṇhā upādāna bhava jāti jarā maraṇa //*
 B.1. *cattāro satipaṭṭhānā cattāro saṃmappadhānā cattāro iddhipādā pañcendriyāni*
 B.2. *pañcabalāni satta bojjhaṅgā ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo sattatiṇsa bodhipakkhiyadhamma³*
 C.1. *abhiññeyyaṃ abhiññātāṃ bhāvetavvaṇca bhāvitāṃ*
 C.2. *pahātavvaṃ pahīnam me tasmā buddho ’smi brāhmaṇa //*
 D.1. *dukkhaṃ dukkhasamuppādaṃ dukkhassa ca atikkamaṃ ariyaṃ catṭhaṅgikaṃ maggaṃ dukkhūpasamagāmina[m] //*
 D.2. *iti buddho abhiññāya dhammam akkhāsi bhikkhūnaṃ dukkhass’ antakaro satthā cakkhumā parinibbuto //*

³ It is not clear whether the stone reads -a or -ā.

2. Discussion

A) Side A may be divided into two parts. The first lists the four Truths of the Noble Ones (*ariya-sacca*), from *dukkha*, suffering, to *magga*, the path; the second lists the twelve links of dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), from *avijjā*, ignorance, to *jarā-maraṇa*, ageing-and-death.

The four Truths of the Noble Ones are given in an inscription from Sārnāth in India⁴ and in a number of inscriptions from Siam.⁵ From an early but as yet undetermined date, it was a practice to place the inscribed text of dependent arising within or upon *thūpas* or *cetiya*s, as shown by numerous inscriptions in Pāli, Prakrit, Sanskrit, and Chinese, from India, Siam, Burma, Malaya, Java, and Central Asia.⁶

B) Side B lists the “37 factors conducive to enlightenment” (*bodhipakkhiya-dhamma*) in seven groups in ascending numerical order:

- the 4 foundations of mindfulness (*cattāro satipaṭṭhānā*);
 the 4 right efforts (*cattāro saṃmappadhānā*);
 the 4 bases of success (*cattāro iddhipādā*);

⁴ See Sten Konow, “Two Buddhist Inscriptions from Sārnāth”, *Epigraphia Indica* IX (1907–08), § 43.

⁵ See Peter Skilling, “A Buddhist Verse Inscription from Andhra Pradesh”, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 34 (1991), pp. 239–46, especially p. 244 and notes thereto, and Part II of the present article.

⁶ For references see Oskar von Hinüber, “Epigraphical Varieties of Continental Pāli from Devnimori and Ratnagiri”, in *Buddhism and its Relation to Other Religions: Essays in Honour of Dr. Shōzen Kumoi on His Seventieth Birthday*, Kyoto, 1985, pp. 185–200. For Java see J.G. de Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia* II, Bandung, 1956, § III; for Central Asia, see Hubert Durt *et al.* “A propos de ‘stūpa miniatures’ votifs du Ve siècle découverts à Tourfan et au Gansu”, *Arts asiatiques* 40 (1985), pp. 92–106.

the 5 faculties (*pañcendriyāni*);
 the 5 powers (*pañcabalāni*);
 the 7 factors of awakening (*satta bojjhaṅgā*);
 the noble eightfold path (*ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo*).

The same list is given in the Pyu script of Śrīkṣetra on one of the gold plates from “Khin Ba’s Mound” at Hmawza in Prome District, Burma.⁷ The only difference is that the present inscription concludes with the general title “37 factors conducive to enlightenment” (*sattatiṇsa bodhipakkhiyadhammā*), not given in the Pyu version.

C) Side C gives a single verse:

I have realized what is to be realized;
 I have cultivated what is to be cultivated;
 I have abandoned what is to be abandoned:
 therefore, O brāhmaṇa, I am a Buddha.

The verse, spoken by the Buddha to the brāhmaṇa Sela, occurs in the *Sela-sutta* of the *Mahāvagga* of the *Sutta-nipāta* (v. 558) and in the verses of the Elder Sela in the *Viṣati-nipāta* of the *Theragāthā* (v. 828). It also occurs in the *Brahmāyu-sutta* in the *Brāhmaṇa-vagga* of the *Majjhima-nikāya* (sutta 91, Vol. II 143.29), spoken by the Buddha to the brāhmaṇa Brahmāyu. Buddhaghosa (5th century) cites the verse for the definition of *sambuddha* in his *Visuddhimagga*.⁸ A partial Lokottaravādin counterpart occurs (in a corrupt state?) in the *Mahāvastu*, spoken to the Ājīvaka Upaka by the Buddha shortly after his

⁷ U Tha Myat, *Pyu Reader*, Rangoon, 1963, Pl. VI 1–3, pp. 26, 30.

⁸ Henry Clarke Warren (ed.), Dharmananda Kosambi (rev.), *Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosācariya* (Harvard Oriental Series 41) [Cambridge, Mass., 1950] Delhi, 1989, p. 166.11.

enlightenment.⁹ Mūlasarvāstivādin parallels occur in the *Verses of Kaineia* in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the *Vinaya* of that school, as preserved in Sanskrit and in Tibetan translation,¹⁰ and in a short sūtra preserved in Tibetan translation in Śamathadeva’s precious commentary on the *Abhidharmakośa*.¹¹ The latter has close parallels in the *Tsa a han ching* (the “longer” Chinese *Samyuktāgama*, translated by Guṇabhadra between 435–43)¹² and in the *Pieh i tsa a han ching* (the “shorter” Chinese *Samyuktāgama*, an anonymous translation done during the Three Ch’in dynasties, 352–431).¹³ Bhavya (6th century) refers to the verse in his *Madhyamakahrdaya-kārikās* for the first of three definitions of the word “Buddha”,¹⁴ and cites it in his commentary thereon, the *Tarkajvālā*,¹⁵ as

⁹ *Mahāvastu* III 327,2 n. 9.

¹⁰ *Kaineia-gāthā*, in Nalinaksha Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. III–1, [Srinagar, 1947] Delhi, 1984, p. 268.19; *Ke na’i bu’i tshigs su bcad pa, sMan gyi gzi*, Peking Tibetan *Tripiṭaka* § 1030, Vol. 41, ‘dul ba ṇa, 218b4. The relationship between the *Kaineia-gāthā* and the better known *Śaila-gāthā*—frequently mentioned in (Mūla)Sarvāstivādin literature—or *Sela-sutta*, which share a number of verses, remains to be determined (cp. *Bhaiṣajyavastu* 275.4–12 with *Sutta-nipāta* vv. 549–54 and *Bhaiṣajyavastu* 277, penult–278, ult with *Sutta-nipāta* vv. 559–64).

¹¹ *Upāyikā Tīkā* on the *Abhidharmakośa*, Peking Tibetan *Tripiṭaka* § 5595, Vol. 118, *mñon pa tu*, 2b6.

¹² Taishō 99, no. 100 (Vol. 2, 28a); see Lewis R. Lancaster in collaboration with Sung-bae Park, *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*, Berkeley, 1979, § 650, Ch. (4) 13.

¹³ Taishō 100, no. 266 (Vol. 2, 467a); *Korean Buddhist Canon* § 651, No. 13.17. I am grateful to J.-U. Hartmann (Berlin) for checking the Chinese sources.

¹⁴ Ch. 3, v. 268: see Malcom David Eckel, *To See the Buddha: a Philosopher’s Quest for the Meaning of Emptiness*, San Francisco, 1992, p. 159 and p. 224, n. 10.

¹⁵ Translated in Eckel, *loc. cit.*

well as in his *Prajñāpradīpa*¹⁶ and *Madhyamakaratnapradīpa*.¹⁷ Kamalaśīla (circa 740–95) also cites the verse, with variants, in his *Pañjikā* on Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṃgraha*.¹⁸

The verse is known from another inscription from Ban Phrom Din, Tambon Lum Khao, Amphoe Khok Samrong, Lop Buri, published with photographs in *Ancient Inscriptions from the Early Period Found in Lop Buri and Vicinity* and in *Inscriptions of Thailand*, Vol. I.¹⁹ The inscription, found by a farmer while ploughing his fields, is in a somewhat cursive and less ornate Pallava, but otherwise the form of the characters is close to that of the present inscription. The editors of the former work date it to the 14th century BE, those of the latter to the 13th to 14th centuries: that is, from about 650 to 850 CE. In both inscriptions the -vv- in place of the -bb- of “standard” Pāli is quite clear: in *bhāvetavvaṃ* and *pahātavvaṃ* in the Nakhon Chaisi inscription, and in *pahātavvaṃ* in the Phrom Din inscription, which is fragmentary. That *va* and *ba* were distinguished in “Dvāravatī Pallava” may be easily seen by

¹⁶ See Christian Lindtner, “Materials for the Study of Bhavya”, in Eivind Kahrs (ed.), *Kalyāṇamitrārāgaṇam: Essays in Honour of Nils Simonsson*, Oslo, 1986, n. 23, p. 191.

¹⁷ Translated by Lindtner, *op. cit.*, p. 188. While Bhavya's authorship of the *Prajñāpradīpa* is not questioned, it is for the other two works. For this problem, see David Seyfort Ruegg, “On the Authorship of Some Works Ascribed to Bhāvaviveka/Bhavya”, in David Seyfort Ruegg and Lambert Schmithausen (ed.), *Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamaka*, Leiden, 1990, pp. 59–71, and also Eckel, p. 197, n. 1.

¹⁸ Swami Dwarikadas Shastri (ed.), *Tattvasaṃgraha of Ācārya Shāntarakṣita with the Commentary 'Pañjikā' of Shri Kamalaśīla* (Bauddha Bharati Series 2), Vol. 2, Varanasi, 1982, p. 1121.11. Cf. the translation in Ganganatha Jha, *The Tattvasaṃgraha of Shāntarakṣita with the Commentary of Kamalaśīla*, Vol. II, [Baroda, 1939] Delhi, 1986, p. 1567.

¹⁹ *Charuk boran run raek phop ti lop buri lae klai khiang*, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 2524 [1981], pp. 14–17; *Charuk nai prathet thai*, Vol. I, National Library-Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 2529 [1986], pp. 237–40.

comparing the shape of the *va* with that of the *ba* in *buddha* in both inscriptions, and in several other places in the present inscription. Oskar von Hinüber has already noted the same peculiarity in a *dharmacakka* inscription from Nakhon Pathom—which carries the readings *pahātavvaṃ*, *sacchikātavvaṃ*, and *bhāvetavvaṃ*—as well as in a later inscription from Lamphun.²⁰ The form also occurs in *veditavvo* in the “Maunggun plates” from near Hmawza in Burma.²¹ These texts offer further evidence for von Hinüber's suggestion that “it does not seem to be altogether impossible that the Pāli of Dvāravatī differed in this respect [that is, using -vv- for -bb-] at least from standard Ceylonese Pāli”.

D) Side D contains two verses, one to each line. The first summarizes the four truths:

Suffering, the arising of suffering,
the transcendence of suffering,
and the noble eightfold path
that leads to the cessation of suffering.

The verse occurs frequently in Pāli: in the *Dhammapada* (v. 191), *Samyutta-nikāya* (II 185.23), *Itivuttaka* (17.22–18.2), *Theragāthā*

²⁰ “Epigraphical Varieties”, p. 186, referring to G. Coedès, “Une roue de la loi avec inscription en pāli provenant du site de P'ra Pathom”, in *Artibus Asiae* 19 (1966) pp. 221–26. The inscription has been published in *Charuk nai prathet thai*, Vol. I, pp. 59–64. The inscribed *dharmacakka* from Manorom district, Chai Nat, studied in Part II below has the form *sacchikātabba*, as read in *Boranakhadi Muang U Taphao* (Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 2534 [1991], p. 180): this should be checked against the original. A Pāli *Vinaya* manuscript from Nepal has the form *ññāpetavvo*: see Oskar von Hinüber, *The Oldest Pāli Manuscript: Four Folios of the Vinaya-Piṭaka from the National Archives*, Kathmandu, Stuttgart, 1991, p. 9.

²¹ Louis Finot, “Un nouveau document sur le bouddhisme birman”, *Journal asiatique*, dixième série, tome XX (1912), p. 131.

(v. 1259), and *Therīgāthā* (vv. 186, 193, 310, 321). It occurs in Sanskrit in (Mūla)Sarvāstivādin literature: in the *Paśyavarga* of the *Udānavarga*, and, with variants, in the *Vidyāsthānopama-sūtra* and the *Prātihārya-sūtra* (of the *Divyāvadāna*); it is cited in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the *Vibhāṣāprabhā-vṛtti* on the *Abhidharma-dīpa*, and other treatises. In Tibetan translation it occurs in the *Kṣudraka-vastu* of the *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins and in the *Dhvajāgra-sūtra* of the same school.²² In the *Āryamaitreya-vyākaraṇa* it is presented as the epitome of Maitreya's teaching:²³ thus it is a formula summarizing the teaching of the Buddhas. In a Sogdian eulogy dedicated to Avalokiteśvara it seems to have been used as a mantra.²⁴ The verse occurs three times in inscriptions: in a slightly Sanskritized Pāli from Guntupalle in Andhra Pradesh, and in Pāli from U Thong (Suphan Buri province) and in the present inscription from Nakhon Pathom.²⁵

The subject of the second verse is the Buddha:

Thus the Buddha, having realized [the truth]
taught the Dhamma to the monks;
the Teacher, who has put an end to suffering,
the one with vision, has realized full nibbāna.

²² For references see Skilling, "A Buddhist Verse Inscription", pp. 240–41. For the *Dhvajāgra-sūtra* version see P. Skilling, *Mahāsūtras: Great Discourses of the Buddha*, Vol. I, Oxford, 1994, pp. 306–7. The verse is discussed in further details in Vol. II of the same work (forthcoming).

²³ Nalinaksha Dutt (ed.), *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. IV, [Calcutta, 1959] Delhi, 1984, vv. 58cd–59ab (p. 203); Sylvain Lévi, "Maitreya le consolateur", in *Études d'orientalisme publiées par le Musée Guimet à la mémoire de Raymonde Linossier*, tome II, Paris, 1932, v. 60 (p. 387). I owe this reference to Gregory Schopen, "Hīnayāna Texts in a 14th Century Persian Chronicle: Notes on Some of Rashid al-Dīn's Sources", *Central Asiatic Journal* 26 (1982), pp. 228–35.

²⁴ E. Benveniste, *Textes Sogdiens édités, traduits et commentés* (Mission Pelliot en Asie centrale III, Paris, 1940, p. 113.

²⁵ For the first two see Skilling, "A Buddhist Verse Inscription".

The verse occurs once in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* (*Dīghanikāya* II 123.9) and twice in the *Ānguttara-nikāya* (II 2.3, IV 106.5). In all three cases it is spoken by the Buddha, following the verse:

Virtue, concentration, wisdom,
and the unsurpassed liberation:
these dhammas have been realized
by Gotama, the illustrious.²⁶

This is the first time that the verse has been noted in an inscription. The *iti* ("thus") with which it commences should refer to the preceding verse on the four Truths; thus the two verses of Side D seem to have been connected in the Dvāravatī tradition.

3. Conclusions

The present inscription is one of the most complete of the Dvāravatī corpus, which is made up of mostly fragmentary texts. It is a significant addition to our knowledge of the Buddhism of the Dvāravatī period. The language of the texts (with the exception of the opening Sanskrit *śrī*) is Pāli. The orthography (with the exception of the -vv- / -bb- discrepancy) agrees with that of the Pāli texts transmitted in Ceylon: indeed the verses of the inscription could have been taken from a modern printed edition of the canon, with scarcely a single variant.

The inscription confirms the preoccupation of the Dvāravatī Buddhists with what the exhibition catalogue has called "the essence of the Buddha's teaching". The four truths are given twice, in the bare list of A and in the verse of D. Dependent arising is given in A; it is also given

²⁶ *silam samādhi paññā ca vimutti ca anuttarā, anubuddhā ime dhammā gotamena yasassinā.*

in fuller form on at least one *dharmacakka*, and is represented by the numerous *ye dhammā* inscriptions from various sites. The Pyu of Śrīkṣetra also inscribed canonical texts on various materials, sometimes the same ones inscribed in Dvāravatī: dependent arising, the *ye dhammā* verse, and the 37 factors.²⁷ While such a practice is well attested in Burma and Siam, no contemporary canonical Pāli inscriptions have been found in Ceylon, where extensive excavations have taken place for over a century. It is astonishing that an article published in 1971 could list only three Pāli inscriptions for the whole of Ceylon, all later than those of Dvāravatī or Śrīkṣetra.²⁸ Examples of canonical inscriptions from South India are rare: I know of only the interesting trove of distinctive sealings in Pallava script from the Śāṅkaram Hills in Andhra Pradesh,²⁹ and the verse from Andhra mentioned above. Throughout Northern India the practice of inscribing the *ye dharmā* verse and the *Discourse on Dependent Arising*, whether in Sanskrit or Prakrit, was widespread from at least the early Gupta period. This suggests that the early Buddhism of Burma and Siam had links with Northern India—the heartland of Magadha—which is only natural since such links may be seen throughout the historical period up to the present. On the basis of available evidence, the predominant school at both Dvāravatī and Śrīkṣetra seems to have been a form of Theravāda affiliated to that of

²⁷ For canonical citations from Burma, see Nihar-ranjan Ray, “Early Traces of Buddhism in Burma”, *The Journal of the Greater India Society*, Vol. VI-1 (January, 1939), pp. 41–49, and G.H. Luce, “The Advent of Buddhism to Burma”, in L. Cousins et al. (ed.), *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner*, Dordrecht and Boston, 1974, pp. 125–127.

²⁸ Malini Dias, “Sanskrit and Pali Inscriptions of Ceylon”, in *Ancient Ceylon*, No. 1, January 1971, pp. 105–109.

²⁹ See A. Rea, “A Buddhist Monastery on the Śāṅkaram Hills, Vizagapatam District”, *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, 1907–8*, repr. Delhi, 1990, pp. 149–80 (especially pp. 169–72) and Pls. LVIII–LX. The inscriptions that I am able to decipher from the rather murky reprint give the *ye dharmā* verse in Sanskrit.

India—whether of the North, of Andhra Pradesh, or several regions together—as well as to that of Ceylon. The early Buddhism of South-east Asia should not, however, be seen as a simple import. By the time of the inscriptions it had already adapted to local social and cultural conditions, and evolved its own characteristics.

II. PĀLI INSCRIPTIONS ON A STONE *DHAMMACAKKA* AND AN OCTAGONAL PILLAR FROM CHAI NAT*

Among the interesting inscriptions unearthed in Siam in recent years are some fragments in Pāli, inscribed in the South-east Asian Pallava script on a stone *dharmacakka* or “wheel of the law” and on an octagonal stone pillar, which originally supported the wheel. The fragments were discovered at Tambon Hang Nam Sakhon, Amphoe Manorom, Chai Nat (Jayanāda) Province, on 5th October, 2531 [1988]. The inscription has been published in a Fine Arts Department report entitled *The Archaeology of U Taphao*.¹ Its paleography has been discussed by Christian Bauer in his “Notes on Mon Epigraphy” (accompanied by four plates, without transcription).² The Fine Arts Department dates the inscription to the 12th century BE (*circa* 550–650

* References to Pāli texts are to roman script editions of the Pali Text Society (PTS); to Thai-script editions of the Syāmrattassa Tepitakam (SyR) or those published by the Mahāmakutārājavidyālaya (Mm); to Burmese script Chatthasāṅgīti editions (ChS); or to Nāgarī script Nālandā editions (Nāl), as available.

¹ *Boranakhadi Muang U Taphao*, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 2534 [1991]. A transcription and Thai translation of the fragments by Cha-ame Kaewglai is given in an Appendix, pp. 179–82, an English summary of the book at pp. 183–93. For two photographs of the *dharmacakra* and one of the pillar, see (the unnumbered) pp. 32, 33. Cf. also *The Silpakorn Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (1991), pp. 4–50.

² “Notes on Mon Epigraphy”, *Journal of the Siam Society* 79/1 (1991), Pls. 1–4 and pp. 48–55.

CE), while Bauer concludes that it is possible “to date this *dharmacakra* with certainty to the 6th century AD”.³

The surviving fragments of the wheel, which is carved in the round, are inscribed on both rim and spokes. Associated finds include fragments of an ear and the nose and mouth of a stone deer.⁴ Pairs of recumbent deer, symbolizing the Deer Park where the Buddha delivered the First Sermon, have been found in association with *dharmacakkas* elsewhere in Central Siam. The motif of a wheel flanked by a pair of deer is known from sculpture and monastic sealings from Northern India, and frequently adorns the roof-tops of Tibetan temples up to the present day.

I give here a romanized version of Cha-ame Kaewglai’s Thai script transcription.⁵ The sequence is that of Cha-ame’s restored text; the numbers in square brackets are those assigned to fragments or groups of fragments by the Fine Arts Department. In No. 1.a, text in square brackets is supplied from the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*; in Nos. 1.b and 2, the symbol “xxx” indicates missing text.

1. *Dhammacakka* inscriptions

1.a. Rim of the wheel: *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*

[6] [pu]bbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi

[5] dukkham ariyyasaccaṃ parinñeyyan ti me bhikkhave [pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu] cakkhum [udapādi nāṇaṃ udapādi] paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi

³ Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁴ Illustrated in *Boranakhadi Muang U Taphao*, p. 22.

⁵ Unfortunately a complete set of photographs of the inscriptions has not been published, and only a few of those mentioned above are readable.

[1] [ā]loko udapādi // [taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkham ariyasaccaṃ] parinñātan ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi nāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi // idaṃ dukkhasamudayo ariyya[saccaṃ ti me bhikkhave...]

[3] paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi // taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhanirodho ariyya[saccaṃ...]

[2] [sa]cchikātabban ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi⁶ nāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi⁷ // [taṃ kho panidaṃ dukkhanirodho ariyasaccaṃ] sacchikatan ti me bhikkhave pu-

[4] -bbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi nāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi [āloko udapādi]

1.b. Spokes: Commentary on the Four Truths?

[8]⁸

(1) na

(2) tti

(3) pilana

(4) samudayasa⁹

(5) dhipateyya¹⁰

(6) sa xxx /

(7) xxx

(8) xxx

⁶ *dudapādi*, Cha-ame.

⁷ *dudapādi*, Cha-ame.

⁸ The numbers in parentheses are those assigned to individual spokes.

⁹ See the upper spoke in Bauer, Pl. 3.

¹⁰ See the lower spoke in Bauer, Pl. 3.

[9]

(1) dhi

(2) samudayasa

2. Inscription on octagonal pillar: Verses¹¹

[7] (1) ×××

(2) ××× tato ××× dimata¹² // tobā¹³ ×××

(3) ××× mena iti saccam visattikā tam ×××

(4) ××× mena tato saccam idaṃ matam / / ×××

(5) ××× iti so¹⁴ saccasam¹⁵ ×××

Discussion

1.a) Fragments 1 to 6 belong to the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, the first sermon spoken by the Buddha to the Group of Five Monks at the Deer Park (Migadāya) at Isipatana in Vārāṇasī.¹⁶ The surviving portions all belong to the section on the Buddha's realization of the three insights (*sacca-*, *kicca-*, *kata-nāṇam*) into the first three Truths of the Noble Ones (*ariya-sacca*).¹⁷ Since the fourth Truth must have been included, we may

¹¹ Most of the pillar text can be read from the plate at *Boranakhadi Muang U Taphao*, p. 33, and Bauer, Pl. 4. The numbers in parentheses are those of the lines, after Bauer.

¹² From Bauer's plate it appears that Cha-ame's reading may be corrected to *(i)da(m) matam*, as in the texts (the "texts" will be described and cited below).

¹³ *tobā* cannot be right: the texts have here *tam vinā*.

¹⁴ Cha-ame reads *sā*, but the reading is clearly *so*, as in the texts.

¹⁵ The last word might be *samato*: only a single *ma* is visible, followed by what might be the left-hand curve of an *o*.

¹⁶ *Samyuttanikāya*, *Mahāvagga*, *Saccasamyutta*, *Dhammacakkappavattana-vagga*, 1.

¹⁷ SN (PTS) V 422.2–22; (SyR) Vol. 19, 529.11–530.10. The same text occurs

Continues...

conclude that the rim of the wheel gave at least the complete text of the realization of the three insights into each of the Four Truths.

As transcribed, the text presents two orthographical peculiarities:

ariyya in Frags. [5], [1], and [3];

paṇṇā in Frags. [1], [3], [2], and [4] (but *pañṇā* in Frag. [5]).

We may also note that the text has *dukkhasamudayo* in Frag. [1] and *dukkhanirodho* in Frag. [3], which agree with the readings of SyR (both SN and *Vinaya*), against the *dukkhasamudayaṃ* and *dukkhanirodham* of PTS (both SN and *Vinaya*).¹⁸

1.b) The fragmentary condition of the inscriptions prevents a precise identification. The presence (twice) of the word *samudayasa* on a *dhammacakka* inscribed with the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* leaves little doubt that the subject is again the Four Truths. The two other preserved words, *pilana* and *[ā]dhipateyya*, do not occur in connection with the Four Truths in the early sutta literature. The citation might therefore belong to the later commentarial literature, which assigns four meanings to each of the Four Truths, and includes the two terms:¹⁹

in the *Mahāvagga* of the *Vinaya*: (PTS) I 11.1–14; (SyR) Vol. 4, 19.10–20.16. Almost the same text occurs as an independent sutta, *Tathāgatena vuttam*, at SN V (PTS) 424–25, (SyR) 532–34, with the substitution of *tathāgatānam* for *me*.

¹⁸ The question of case endings of the Four Truths has been discussed in detail by K.R. Norman, "The Four Noble Truths: A Problem of Pāli Syntax", in L.A. Hercus *et al.* (ed.), *Indological and Buddhist Studies, Volume in Honour of Professor J.W. de Jong on his Sixtieth Birthday*, 2nd. ed., Delhi, 1984, pp. 377–91 (see especially § 1.5) (= *Collected Papers* Vol. II, PTS, Oxford 1991).

¹⁹ Here and in the following citations I underline the terms that occur in the Chai Nat inscription.

- A. *dukkha*: (1) *pīlana*, (2) *saṃkhata*, (3) *santāpa*, (4) *vipariṇāma*;
 B. *samudaya*: (5) *āyuhana*, (6) *nidāna*, (7) *saññoga*, (8) *palibodha*;
 C. *nirodha*: (9) *nissaraṇa*, (10) *viveka*, (11) *asaṃkhata*, (12) *amata*;
 D. *magga*: (13) *niyyāna*, (14) *hetu*, (15) *dassana*, (16) *ādhīpateyya*.

A concise statement of this theory is found near the end of the *Buddhānussatikathā* of the *Visuddhimagga*:²⁰

pīlana-saṃkhata-santāpa-vipariṇāmatthēna vā dukkhaṃ ariya-saccaṃ; āyuhana-nidāna-samyoga-palibodhatthēna samudayaṃ; nissaraṇa-vivekāsaṃkhata-amatatthēna nirodhaṃ; niyyānika-hetu-dassanādhīpateyyatthēna maggaṃ.

The Truth of the Noble Ones regarding suffering has the senses of (1) oppressing, (2) being compounded, (3) burning, and (4) change. Origin has the senses of (5) accumulating, (6) source, (7) bond, and (8) obstructing. Cessation has the senses of (9) final release, (10) solitude, (11) being uncompound, and (12) being free from death. The path has the senses of (13) outlet, (14) cause, (15) seeing, and (16) predominance.

The four senses of the Truth of the Path (*maggasacca*) are preserved in another inscription, on a *dharmacakka* from Nakhon Pathom dated to the 6th or 7th century: *niyyānikahetudassanādhīpateyyabhāvena maggasacce*.²¹ The phrasing is close but not identical to that of the *Visuddhimagga*.

²⁰ Chap. VII.62; (Mm) I 271.2–5.

²¹ Bauer, *op. cit.*, Fig. F, no. Kd.24 (for which read Kd.29; for Coedès 1956 read Coedès 1966) gives 6th century; *Charuk nai prathet thai* (hereafter referred to as *Charuk*), Vol. I, National Library-Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 2529 [1986], p. 59 gives 12th century BE = circa 550–650 CE. See also Supaphan na

Continues...

The 16 meanings (*aṭṭha*) are different from the 16 aspects (*ākāra*) of the Four Truths, well-known in the Vaibhāṣika tradition, and are apparently unique to Theravādin exegesis.²² The earliest evidence of the Theravādin theory is in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, where the terms occur several times.²³ The first occurrence is early in the text, in the “Discussion of Insight” of the *Mahāvagga*:²⁴

Bangchang, *Wiwathanakan ngan khian phasa bali nai prathet thai: charuk tamnan phongsawadan san prakat*, Bangkok, 2529 [1986], pp. 34–36; G. Coedès, “Une roue de la loi avec inscription en pāli provenant du site de P’ra Pathom”, *Artibus Asiae* 19 (1966), pp. 222, 225.

²² For the 16 aspects according to the Vaibhāṣikas see e.g. Valentina Stache-Rosen (ed., tr.), *Dogmatische Begriffsreihen im Älteren Buddhismus II, Das Saṅgītisūtra und sein Kommentar Saṅgītiparyāya*, Part I, Berlin, 1968, IV.14 (p. 100); I. Armelin (tr.), *Le coeur de la loi suprême, Traité de Fa-cheng, Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra de Dharmasrī*, Paris, 1978, p. 116; José Van den Broeck (tr.), *La saveur de l’immortel (A-p’i-t’an Kan Lu Wei Lun), la version chinoise de l’Amṛtarasa de Ghosaka (T. 1553)*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1977, p. 170; Marcel Van Velthem (ed., tr.) *Le traité de la descente dans la profonde loi (Abhidharmāvatāraśāstra) de l’Arhat Skandhila*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1977, pp. 48 (translation), 98.5–16 (text); *Sārasamuccaya-nāma-abhidharmāvatāra-ṭīkā*, Peking Tanjur No. 5598, Vol. 119, mñon pa thu, 359b8 foll.; N. Aiyaswami Sastri, *Pañcavastuka Śāstra and Pañcavastuka-vibhāṣā*, Santiniketan, n.d., p. 10; *Abhidharmakośa* VII, 13a; Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *L’Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, tome V, Brussels, 1971, pp. 30–39; Padmanabh S. Jaini (ed.), *Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti*, Patna, 1977, pp. 329–30; Chr. Lindtner (ed.), “Candrakīrti’s Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa, I. Tibetan Text”, *Acta Orientalia* XL (1979), pp. 140–41.

²³ Although the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is included in the *Khuddaka-nikāya* of the Pāli Canon, it is stylistically related to the Abhidhamma and Commentarial literature: see A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi, 1970, pp. 312–16; A.K. Warder, Introduction to Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (tr.), *The Path of Discrimination*, London, 1982; K.R. Norman, *Pāli Literature* (Jan Gonda [ed.], *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. VII, Fasc. 2), Wiesbaden, 1983, pp. 87–89. Tradition ascribes the work to Sāriputta. Warder’s assertion (Introduction to Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, p. xlvii, repeated almost *verbatim* in Norman, *Pāli Literature*, p. 132) that “Mahānāma begins [his commentary, the *Saddhammapakāsinī*] by saying that Sāriputta explained the *Dhammacakkapavattana Suttanta* by

Continues...

- A. *dukkhaṭṭho abhiññeyyo dukkhassa pīḷanaṭṭho abhiññeyyo dukkhassa saṃkhataṭṭho abhiññeyyo*²⁵ *dukkhassa santāpaṭṭho abhiññeyyo dukkhassa vipariṇāmaṭṭho abhiññeyyo.*
- B. *samudayaṭṭho abhiññeyyo samudayaṣṣa āyuhanaṭṭho abhiññeyyo samudayaṣṣa nidānaṭṭho abhiññeyyo samudayaṣṣa saññogaṭṭho abhiññeyyo samudayaṣṣa palibodhaṭṭho abhiññeyyo.*
- C. *nirodhaṭṭho*²⁶ *abhiññeyyo nirodhassa nissaraṇaṭṭho abhiññeyyo nirodhassa vivekaṭṭho abhiññeyyo nirodhassa asaṃkhataṭṭho abhiññeyyo nirodhassa amataṭṭho abhiññeyyo.*
- D. *maggatṭho abhiññeyyo maggassa niyyānaṭṭho abhiññeyyo maggassa hetuṭṭho abhiññeyyo maggassa dassanaṭṭho abhiññeyyo maggassa ādhipateyyaṭṭho abhiññeyyo.*

A longer passage occurs in the “Discussion of the Truths” in the “Chapter on Pairs”:²⁷

composing the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*” is incorrect. The text reads (Mm I 2.4):

*saddhammacakkānupavattakena saddhammasenāpatisaṅvakena
suttesu vuttesu tathāgatena bhūtatthavedittam upāgatena
yo bhāsito bhāsitaṅkovidena dhammappaḍipujjānāyakena
pāṭho viśiṭṭho paṭisambhidānaṃ maggo ti...*

The verses refer to the author, Sāriputta, by several of his epithets—the one who turns the *dhammacakka* after the Buddha (*saddhammacakkānupavattake*: cf. *Suttanipāta* 556–57 = *Theragāthā* 826–27), the Dhamma-general (*saddhammasenāpati*: cf. *Theragāthā* 1083)—but say nothing about the *Dhammacakkapavattana-sutta*.

²⁴ *Ñānakathā*, (PTS) I 19.31–20.6; (SyR) 28.10–20; translation pp. 21–22. For a commentary see *Saddhammapakāsinī nāma paṭisambhidāmaggaṭṭhakathā*, (Mm, BE 2465 [= CE 1922]) I 123.14–124.4.

²⁵ SyR : PTS omits *dukkhassa saṃkhataṭṭho abhiññeyyo*.

²⁶ *nirodhaṭṭho* SyR : *nirodho* PTS.

- A. *kathaṃ dukkhaṃ tathaṭṭhena saccam? cattāro dukkhassa dukkhaṭṭhā tathā avitathā anaññathā: dukkhassa pīḷanaṭṭho saṃkhataṭṭho santāpaṭṭho vipariṇāmaṭṭho. ime cattāro dukkhassa dukkhaṭṭhā tathā avitathā anaññathā; evaṃ dukkhaṃ tathaṭṭhena saccam.*
- B. *kathaṃ samudayo tathaṭṭhena saccam? cattāro samudayaṣṣa samudayaṭṭhā tathā avitathā anaññathā: samudayaṣṣa āyuhanaṭṭho nidānaṭṭho saññogaṭṭho palibodhaṭṭho. ime cattāro samudayaṣṣa samudayaṭṭhā tathā avitathā anaññathā; evaṃ samudayo tathaṭṭhena saccam.*
- C. *kathaṃ nirodho tathaṭṭhena saccam? cattāro nirodhassa nirodhaṭṭhā tathā avitathā anaññathā: nirodhassa nissaraṇaṭṭho vivekaṭṭho asaṃkhataṭṭho amataṭṭho. ime cattāro nirodhassa nirodhaṭṭhā tathā avitathā anaññathā; evaṃ nirodho tathaṭṭhena saccam.*
- D. *kathaṃ maggo tathaṭṭhena saccam? cattāro maggassa maggaṭṭhā tathā avitathā anaññathā: maggassa niyyānaṭṭho hetuṭṭho dassanaṭṭho ādhipateyyaṭṭho. ime cattāro maggassa maggaṭṭhā tathā avitathā anaññathā; evaṃ maggo tathaṭṭhena saccam.*

The next evidence for the theory is from the *Vimuttimaggā*, a manual transmitted by the Abhayagiri school in Ceylon and abroad. The work was composed by Upatissa, in perhaps the 1st century CE, and

²⁷ *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, *Yuganaddhavagga*, *Saccakathā*, (PTS) II 104.14–105.10; (SyR) Vol. 31, 449.5–20; translation p. 297. The passage is cited in abbreviation under *vibhāga* in the *Saccaniddesa* of the *Visuddhimaggā* (Chap. XVI.15, Mm III 76.18–77.4) and in the *Saccavibhaṅga* of the *Sammohavinodanī nāma vibhaṅga-aṭṭhakathā*, (ChS 78.14–19; Nāl 84.12–17).

certainly before the time of Buddhaghosa (first half of the 5th century).²⁸ The original Pāli is lost, but the complete text survives in Chinese translation, done by *Saṃghabhara, a *bhikkhu* of Funan (an early state in the region of southern mainland South-east Asia), at the beginning of the 6th century.²⁹ The section in question is also preserved in Tibetan translation, as cited by the North Indian scholar Daśabalaśrimitra in his *Saṃskṛtāsamskṛta-viniścaya*, composed in the 12th or 13th century.³⁰ It deals with the Four Truths under the heading “natures” or “characteristics” (*mtshan ñid* = *lakṣhaṇa*).

(Tibetan text)³¹

mtshan ñid zes pa ni (a) *sdug bśhal ni ñes pa'i mtshan ñid dan/*
 (b) *kun 'byuñ ni rgyu'i mtshan ñid dan/* (c) *'gog pa ni mi skye*
ba'i mtshan ñid dan/ (d) *lam ni*³² *thabs kyi mtshan ñid do//*
*yañ na*³³ *sdug bśhal ni* (1) *gzir ba'i mtshan ñid dan/* (2) *kun*
*du*³⁴ *gduñ ba'i mtshan ñid dan/* (3) *'dus byas kyi mtshan ñid*
dan/ (4) *yoñs su 'gyur ba'i mtshan ñid do// kun 'byuñ ni* (5)
'phen par byed pa'i mtshan ñid dan/ (6) *gzi'i*³⁵ *mtshan ñid dan/*

²⁸ Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

²⁹ For the affiliation of the *Vimuttimagga* and the name and date of the translator, see P. Skilling, “*Vimuttimagga* and Abhayagiri: The Form-aggregate according to the *Saṃskṛtāsamskṛta-viniścaya*”, *JPTS* XX (1994) 171–210.

³⁰ For Daśabalaśrimitra see P. Skilling, “The *Saṃskṛtāsamskṛta-viniścaya* of Daśabalaśrimitra”, *Buddhist Studies Review*, 4/1 (1987), pp. 3–23, and “Theravādin Literature in Tibetan Translation”, *JPTS* XIX (1993), pp. 140–42.

³¹ Daśabalaśrimitra (sTobs bcu dpal bśes gñen), *'Dus byas dan 'dus ma byas rnam par ñes pa*, Derge Tanjur (D) No. 3897, *dbu ma ha*, 192b4–7; Peking Tanjur (Q) No. 5865, Vol. 146, *no mtshar ño*, 109a6–b2.

³² *ni* D : Q omits.

³³ /D : Q omits.

³⁴ *kun du* D : *kun tu* Q.

³⁵ *gzi'i* Q : *bzi'i* D.

(7) *kun du tshogs*³⁶ *pa'i mtshan ñid dan/* (8) *yoñs su sbags pa'i*
mtshan ñid do// 'gog pa ni (9) *ñes par 'byuñ ba'i mtshan ñid*
*dan/*³⁷ (10) *dben pa'i mtshan ñid dan/* (11) *'dus ma byas kyi*
mtshan ñid dan/ (12) *mi 'chi ba'i mtshan ñid do// lam ni* (13)
ñes par 'byin par byed pa'i mtshan ñid dan/ (14) *yañ dag par*
thob par byed pa'i mtshan ñid dan/ (15) *mthoñ ba'i mtshan ñid*
dan/ (16) *lhag pa'i bdag po'i mtshan ñid do//*

(Translation from the Tibetan)³⁸

“Natures” (*lakṣhaṇa*): (a) suffering (*dukkha*) has the nature of fault (*dosa*). (b) Origin (*samudaya*) has the nature of cause (*hetu*). (c) Cessation (*nirodha*) has the nature of non-birth (*anuppatti?*). (d) Path (*magga*) has the nature of method (*upāya*).³⁹

Furthermore, suffering has (1) the nature of oppressing (*pīḷana*),⁴⁰ (2) the nature of burning (*santāpa*), (3) the nature of being compounded (*saṃkhata*), and (4) the nature of change (*vipariṇāma*). Origin has (5) the nature of projecting,⁴¹ (6) the

³⁶ *kun du tshogs* D : *kun tu 'tshogs* Q.

³⁷ *dan/* D : *do//* Q.

³⁸ The Pāli terms given in parentheses are equivalents of standard Sanskrit equivalents of the Tibetan; references are to Lokesh Chandra, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*, Compact edition, Kyoto, 1990 (*TSD*). Nos. 1–4, 6, 9–13, and 15–16 agree with the Pāli. The order of nos. 2 and 3 is opposite to that of the Pāli. The remaining items are discussed in the notes.

³⁹ I have not traced an exact Pāli parallel to (a)–(d), which agrees with the Chinese.

⁴⁰ *gzir ba* = *Pīḍ*: *pīḍita*, *paripīḍita*, *prapīḍita*, also *ardita*, *ātura*, *ārta*: *TSD* pp. 2083–84.

⁴¹ *'phen pa* is regularly used for the root *KṣIP*; *byed pa* = *karana*. Cf. *TSD* pp. 1592–93: *'phen pa* = *ākṣepa*, *ākṣepana*, *āvedha*, *preraka*. The term may be interpreted to mean that *tanhā* projects further existence and rebirth. I cannot

nature of source (*nidāna*), (7) the nature of accumulating,⁴² and (8) the nature of defiling.⁴³ Cessation has (9) the nature of final release (*nissaraṇa*), (10) the nature of solitude (*viveka*), (11) the nature of being uncompounded (*asamkhata*), and (12) the nature of freedom from death (*amata*). The path has (13) the nature of outlet (*niyyāna*), (14) the nature of achieving,⁴⁴ (15) the nature of seeing (*dassana*), and (16) the nature of predominance (*ādhipateyya*).⁴⁵

suggest a Pāli equivalent.

⁴² The Pāli has here *saṃ-yoga*. The Tibetan *kun tu* = *saṃ*; it is possible that here *tshogs* (= accumulation, collection, group) = *yoga*, although such a translation is not attested. *kun tu tshogs pa* = *samāgatā* (TSD p. 24). Cf. Akira Hirakawa *et al.*, *Index to the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Part 1, Tokyo, 1973, p. 362, *saṃyoga* = *mtshuṅs par ldan pa*, *phrad pa*, *'brel ba*, *reg pa*. The term may be interpreted to mean that *tanhā* accumulates suffering; in fact, in the present context, this seems a more suitable interpretation of *saṃyoga* than the sense of “bond” = *saññojana*, though both are possible.

⁴³ The Pāli has here *palibodha* = “obstruction, hindrance, obstacle, impediment, drawback” (PED), a term which does not seem to be known in Buddhist Sanskrit. The Tibetan *yonṣ su* = *pari. sbags*, a rather rare term in translation literature, does not carry the sense “obstruct”, but rather to saturate, dampen, besmear, stain, pollute: cf. TSD p. 1742, *khraḡ gis sbags* = *rudhira-mrakṣita*; *khraḡ sbags śiṅ* = *rudhiraḥlipta*; Lokesh Chandra, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*, *Supplementary Volume 5* (New Delhi, 1993, p. 1349) *sbags (pa)* = *akta*, *ādigdha*, *ārḍra*, *sikta*; Hirakawa *et al.*, p. 300, *mraḡsa* = *sbags*. Derge appears to read *spags*, but I believe that *sbags* is the correct reading. I cannot suggest a possible Pāli equivalent.

⁴⁴ Here the Tibetan is certainly different from the Pāli, which has *hetu* (a term regularly rendered in Tibetan as *rgyu*). The Tibetan *yaṅ dag par* = *saṃ*; *thob pa* = *PRĀP*; *byed pa* = *karāṇa*. Equivalents listed in TSD (p. 2128) include *saṃprāpaṇa* and *samudāgama*. The Tibetan seems to be confirmed by the Chinese, rendered as “arriving”. The term may be interpreted to mean that *magga* leads to the realization of the levels of the *ariyas*: *soṭāpanna* up to *arahat*.

⁴⁵ *lhag pa* = *adhi*; *bdag po* = *adhipati* (TSD p. 1198). Sanskrit *ādhipatyā* is usually rendered as *dbaṅ byed (pa)*, *dbaṅ (po)*, but there is little doubt that here the text read *ādhipateyya*.

(Translation from the Chinese)⁴⁶

How, through characteristics? (a) Ill is the characteristic of suffering. (b) Origin is the characteristic of cause. (c) Cessation is the characteristic of non-birth. (d) The path is the characteristic of the means of success.⁴⁷

And again, ill is the characteristic of (1) grief, (2) despair, (3) the put together, (4) the limited.⁴⁸ Origin is the characteristic of (5) accumulation, (6) cause, condition,⁴⁹ (7) fetters, (8) clinging. Cessation is the characteristic of (9) renunciation, (10) solitude, (11) the non-conditioned and (12) the choice. The path is the characteristic of (13) vehicle, (14) arriving, (15) seeing, (16) reliance. Thus should these be known through characteristics.

On the whole the *Vimuttimaggā* version of the 16 natures or characteristics agrees with that of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, and confirms that the exegesis was early and “pan-Theravādin”. The next evidence of the theory is found in the *Visuddhimaggā* (see above), a manual of the 5th-century Mahāvihāravāsins. It is also given in still later texts such as the *Sāratthasamuccaya*, a commentary on the *Catubhāṇavāra* composed probably in Ceylon in the second half of the 12th century, and in the *Paṭhamasambodhi*, a South-east Asian life of the Buddha (date uncertain).⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Translation from N.R.M. Ehara, Soma Thera, and Kheminda Thera, *The Path of Freedom (Vimuttimaggā)*, [Colombo, 1961] Kandy, 1977, pp. 274, ult–275.7. The translation shows a number of infelicities, and Nos. 4, 12, and 16 are obscure (the numbering is my own).

⁴⁷ “means of success” might equal the *thabs* = *upāya* of the Tibetan.

⁴⁸ Could the Chinese translate *viparimāṇa* in place of *vipariṇāma*?

⁴⁹ I take “cause, condition” to represent one characteristic.

⁵⁰ *Sāratthasamuccaya*, *Atthakathā-bhāṇavāra*, Vol. 4, repr. Bangkok, BE 2532

While the text inscribed on the spokes may be related in part to the 16 senses of the Four Truths, it is impossible to match all of the fragments. [8](3) and (5), *pīlana* and *ādhipeyya*, certainly belong to the group. The *na* of [8](1) might belong to *āyuhana*, *nidāna*, or *niyyāna*. The *samudayasa* of [8](4) and [9](2) might be *samudayassa*, or possibly *samudaya-sacca*. The *sa* of [8](6) might be *samudaya*, *sacca*, or *saññoga*. But there are no counterparts to the *tī* of [8](2) or the *dhi* of [9](1) (unless for some reason *ādhipeyya* was given twice).⁵¹

2) The complete text of the octagonal pillar fragments may be restored from a set of five verses cited without attribution in two of Buddhaghosa's works, the *Visuddhimagga* and *Sammohavinodanī*, in the *Saddhammapakāsinī* of Mahānāma, which probably dates to the early 6th century, and in a *Vinaya-ṭīkā*, the *Sāratthadīpanī*, composed in Ceylon during the reign of Parakkamabāhu (12th century).⁵² The citation gives one verse for each of the Four Truths in succession, followed by a concluding verse:

[CE 1989], Chap. 21, commentary on the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, p. 53.9 foll.; *Paṭhamasambodhi* (Phasabali), Bangkok, 2537 [1993], *Dhammacakka-parivatta*, p. 126.8 foll. These references were first noted in G. Coedès, "Une roue de la loi...", p. 226.

⁵¹ For *tī*, we may also consider as candidates *pavatti* (for *dukkha*) or *nivatti* (for *nirodha*): see *Visuddhimagga*, Chap. XVI.23, *pavatti-pavattana-nivatti-nivattana-lakkhaṇāni*. Another possibility is the **anuppatti* of the *Vimuttimagga*.

⁵² *Visuddhimagga* Chap. XVI.25, (Mm) III 79.13–80.3; *Sammohavinodanī nāma vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, (ChS) 80.12–22, (Nāl) 86.18–87.2; *Saddhammapakāsinī nāma paṭisambhidāmaggaṭṭhakathā*, (Mm, BE 2465 [= CE 1922]) I 74.1–11 (for Mahānāma see Warder, "Introduction", p. xlv and Norman, *Pāli Literature*, pp. 132–33); *Sāratthadīpanī nāma vinayaṭīkā* (Mm) IV 75, ult–76.10. Phrases preserved in the inscription are underlined. For a commentary on the verses see *Paramatthamañjūsāya nāma visuddhi-maggasaṃvaṇṇanāya mahāṭīkāsammatāya tatiyo bhāgo*, (Mm) 176.6–177.6.

apica

<i>nābādhakaṃ yato dukkhaṃ</i>	<i>dukkhā aññaṃ na bādhakaṃ</i>
<i>bādhakattaniyāmena</i>	<i>tato saccam idaṃ matam.</i>
<i>taṃ vinā nāññato dukkhaṃ</i>	<i>na hoti na ca taṃ tato</i> ⁵³
<i>dukkhahetuniyāmena</i>	<i>itī saccam visattikā.</i> ⁵⁴
<i>nāññā nibbānato santi</i>	<i>santaṃ na ca na taṃ yato</i>
<i>santabhāvanīyāmena</i>	<i>tato saccam idaṃ matam.</i>
<i>maggā aññaṃ na niyyānaṃ</i>	<i>aniyyāno na cāpi so</i>
<i>tacchaniyyānabhāvattā</i> ⁵⁵	<i>itī so saccasammato.</i>
<i>itī tacchāvīpallāsa-</i>	<i>bhūtabhāvaṃ catūsvapi</i> ⁵⁶
<i>dukkhādīsu visesena</i> ⁵⁷	<i>saccaṭṭhaṃ</i> ⁵⁸ <i>āhu paṇḍitāti.</i>

There is no pain but is affliction,
And naught that is not pain afflicts:
This certainty that it afflicts
Is what is reckoned here as truth.

No other source of pain than craving,
Nor aught that source provides but pain:

⁵³ *Visuddhimagga* (Mm) only has *tan tato*.

⁵⁴ The word *visattikā* occurs (usually in connection with *taṇhā* and as object of forms of the verb *TRĪ*) at *Dhammapada* 180a, 335b; *Suttanipāta* 333c, 768c, 857d; the Sanskrit *viśaktikā* occurs at *Udānavarga* 3:14c, 15a; 15:4f; 16:6c, 8c, 10c; 29:53a, 55a; 30:17d. It is not clear to me how Nāṇamoli arrived at his rendering of the term as "considered" (see below).

⁵⁵ *Saddhammapakāsinī* only has here *-bhāvena*.

⁵⁶ *catūsvapi Visuddhimagga* (HOS, Mm), *Saddhammapakāsinī* (Mm), *Sāratthadīpanī* (Mm); *catusu pi Sammohavinodanī* (ChS), *catusvapi Sammohavinodanī* (Nāl).

⁵⁷ So *Visuddhimagga* Mm, *Sāratthadīpanī* Mm: v.l. *dukkhādīsvāvisesena* (*Saddhammapakāsinī* Mm), *dukkhādīsvavisesena* (*Visuddhimagga* HOS; *Sammohavinodanī* ChS [-ādi-], Nāl).

⁵⁸ *Saddhammapakāsinī* (Mm) only reads *saccaṭṭhaṃ*.

This certainty in causing pain
Is why it is considered truth.

There is no peace except nibbāna,
Nibbāna cannot be but peace:
This certainty that it is peace
Is what is reckoned here as truth.

No outlet other than the path,
Nor fails the path to be the outlet:
Its status as the very outlet
Has made it recognised as truth.

This real infallibility,
Which is their true essential core,
Is what the wise declare to be
Truth's meaning common to all four.⁵⁹

Enough of the text is preserved to show that the pillar gave at least the first four verses. The *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa (first half of the 5th century), the *Sammohavinodanī* and Mahānāma's *Saddhammapakāsinī* (early 6th century) are earlier than the inscription, but since the verse is a citation, it is not certain that any of these is the source of the inscription, which remains unknown.

Texts dealing with the Four Truths are found on other *dhammacakka* inscriptions from the same period (BE 12th–14th

⁵⁹ Translation from Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification*, Third edition, Kandy, 1975, p. 565 and *The Dispeller of Delusion*, Part I, London, 1987, p. 104.

cenuries).⁶⁰ A wheel from Wat Phra Śrī Ratanamahādhātu, Amphoe Muang, Lop Buri was inscribed with the *Dhammacakkapavattana-sutta*, as shown by the fragment *udapādi vijiā udapādi*, part of the “refrain” that describes the arising of insight into the Four Truths.⁶¹ The following non-canonical verse was popular:

sacca kicca kata ñāṇaṃ catudhā catudhā kataṃ
tivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ dhammacakkaṃ mahesino.

Insight into truth, task, and accomplishment
each performed four times
make up the three turnings and twelve aspects
that are the wheel of the dhamma of the Great Sage [the Buddha].

The complete verse is preserved on the base of a *dhammacakka* from Amphoe Kamphaeng Saen, Nakhon Pathom Province⁶² and on the hub of a wheel from the same province. Individual spokes of the latter name the “twelve aspects” of the Four Truths.⁶³ Fragments of the verse are known from octagonal pillar fragments from Sap Champa, Amphoe Chai Badan, Lop Buri; the verse follows the *ye dhammā gāthā* and is followed by several canonical verses.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ For a list of *dhammacakkas* see Bauer, Fig. F (p. 50); for a bibliography see Bauer, n. 44 (p. 70). Unless otherwise noted, Bauer dates the inscriptions to the 6th century CE.

⁶¹ Supaphan p. 39; *Charuk* I 123–25; *Charuk boran run raek phop ti lop buri lae klai khiang* (hereafter referred to as *Lop Buri*), Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 2524 [1981], pp. 5–6.

⁶² Supaphan p. 37; *Charuk* I 98–99.

⁶³ Supaphan pp. 34–36; *Charuk* I 59–64; Coedès, “Une roue de la loi...”, pp. 221–26.

⁶⁴ Supaphan pp. 21–27; *Lop Buri* 28–29, 74–81. Bauer (Fig. F) dates the inscription to the 7th century CE.

The verse summarizes the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*. The “three turnings” (*tivaṭṭa*) are the “insights (*ñāṇa*) into truth (*sacca*), task (*kicca*), and accomplishment (*kata*)” applied to each of the Four Truths (*catudhā catudhā kataṃ*); these constitute the “twelve aspects” (*dvādasākāra*) of insight into the Truths, which are the “wheel of the dhamma” taught by the Great Sage at the Deer Park.⁶⁵ As Coedès has pointed out, the verse is found in the *Dhammacakkappavattana* chapter of the *Paṭhamasambodhi*⁶⁶ and in the *Sāratthasamuccaya*.⁶⁷ As noted by Coedès, the two works are centuries later than the inscriptions, which date to the 6th or 7th centuries: neither can be the source of the verse, which remains unknown.

The four truths are listed in a canonical verse known from an inscribed brick from U Thong (Suphan Buri) and a stone bar from Nakhon Pathom, as well as (in a slightly Sanskritized Pāli) from Andhra Pradesh.⁶⁸ A number of votive tablets recently excavated at the important site of Yarang in Southern Thailand, dating to about the 7th century, list

⁶⁵ The twelve aspects are imbedded in an unidentified text of homage to the Buddha found on a stone Buddhapāda kept at Wat Chomphuwek, Amphoe Muang, Nonthaburi. The inscription, in the Khom or Khmer script and from a later period (*circa* BE 1800 = CE 1250), ends with the *ye dhammā* verse. See Supaphan pp. 29–33.

⁶⁶ George Coedès, “Une roue de la loi...”, p. 226, and “Une vie indochinoise du Buddha”, in *Mélanges d’Indianisme à la mémoire de Louis Renou*, Paris, 1968, pp. 225–26. See now *Paṭhamasambodhi (Phasabali)*, Bangkok, 2537 [1993], p. 127.6.

⁶⁷ Available to me (as also Coedès) only in the Thai translation, which cites the first three lines of the verse in Pāli: *Sāratthasamuccaya, Atthakathā-bhāṇavāra*, Vol. 4, repr. Bangkok, BE 2532 [CE 1989], Chap. 21, commentary on the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, p. 239.12.

⁶⁸ See Part I of the present article.

the four truths, apparently in Sanskrit.⁶⁹ At least one wheel from Siam was inscribed with the text of the twelve links of conditioned arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*), found on the spoke of a wheel from Amphoe Muang, Lop Buri.⁷⁰

The Chai Nat inscriptions add to our knowledge of the textual basis of Dvāravatī Buddhism. The evidence of the canonical extracts in Pāli (including those known from other inscriptions of the period), which agree closely with the Pāli canon as we know it, in conjunction with exegetical terms or phrases found in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* and with verses found in the works of Buddhaghosa and in later texts, prove with certainty that a form of Theravādin Buddhism was current, perhaps predominant, in the Chao Phraya basin during the 6th and 7th centuries.

⁶⁹ Kongkaew Weerapajak, “Analysis of the Inscriptions found at Yarang”, *The Silpakorn Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 6, January–February 1990, pp. 35–50; Cha-ame Kaewglai, “Charuk ye dhammā”, *The Silpakorn Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 5, September–October 1993, pp. 72–77.

⁷⁰ Supaphan p. 38; *Charuk I* 109–11; *Lop Buri* 7–10.

III. A PARITTA INSCRIPTION FROM ŚRIKṢETRA IN BURMA

In his *Historical Sites in Burma*, U Aung Thaw, then Director of Archaeology, referred to “a very recent discovery of a stone slab, unfortunately badly flaked and weathered...made near the Shwedaga Gate [at Śrikṣetra near Prome]. From the fragmentary lines could be read extracts from three popular Pāli recitations in verse, namely, the *Maṅgala Sutta*, the *Ratana Sutta*, and the *Mora Sutta*. It is datable to [the] 6th or 7th century.”¹ The same author had already published the text of the inscriptions in an article written in Burmese in 1968.² As far as I know, a reproduction has not been published.

According to Aung Thaw’s earlier article, the three texts are in fact from two different stones from two different sites.³ The *Mora-paritta* and *Maṅgala-sutta* are from the stone slab found near the Shwedaga gate. The slab carried about 28 lines of text; the centre is entirely effaced, and the seven fragmentary lines read by Aung Thaw are from the right side. The *Ratana-sutta* is from a stone from Kon Yoe village, north-west of Śrikṣetra. The broken stone carried four lines of

¹ Aung Thaw, *Historical Sites in Burma*, Ministry of Union Culture, [Rangoon], 1972, repr. 1978, p. 32.

² Aung Thaw, “New Light on Pyu Culture”, *Union of Burma Journal of Literary and Social Sciences*, Research Development and Co-ordination Committee, Vol. 1, No. 1, Rangoon, January, 1968, pp. 49–59. The brief English summary on p. 261 does not mention the inscriptions. I am grateful to Michael Aung Thwin and May Kyi Win (Northern Illinois University) for copies of the article. The find has been discussed briefly by Sao Sāimōng Mangrāi in his *The Pādaeng Chronicle and the Jengtung State Chronicle Translated*, Ann Arbor, 1981, p. 15, referring (p. 295) to a paper in Burmese entitled “Later Evidence of Pyū Culture”, read by U Aung Thaw at the Research Congress of Burma, Rangoon, 24 March 1966 (not seen).

³ I am grateful to the U.S. Library of Congress office in New Delhi for providing a summary of the relevant paragraphs, through the kind offices of E. Gene Smith.

text. Here I present a romanized version of Aung Thaw’s Burmese character transcription, following the author’s orthography and division of words and lines, without any changes.⁴

[I. *Mora-paritta*]

- 1.1....pathavippabhāso taṃtaṃ na
- 1.2....apetayaṃ cakkhuma eka
- 1.3....vimuttiyā imaṃso

[II. *Maṅgala-sutta*]

- 2.1....anāthapi
- 2.2....sādevatā bhagavantam gāthāya a
- 2.3....attasammāpa ni dhica etaṃmaṅgala mutamaṃ
- 2.4....jānikammāni etaṃmaṅgalamu

[III. *Ratana-sutta*]

- 3.1. siddhamyaṅkiṃ (khi) dhavāhuraṃvāsaggesuvā
yaṃratanampanītaṃ na...
- 3.2. attitathāgatena idaṃpibuddheratanam
panītaṃ etena saccena su...tu
- 3.3. yānidha bhūtāni...nibhummanivā
yānivā antalikkhe tathāgataṃ
- 3.4. devamanussapūjitaṃ...
...saṅghaṃ namassāmi

⁴ The author does not number the lines. His presentation of the seven lines of the Shwedaga gate slab is clear, but I am uncertain whether my resolution of his text of the Kon Yoe inscription into four lines is correct.

I. *Mora-paritta*

The first fragment is from the *Mora-jātaka*, the ninth text of the *Dalḥa-vagga* of the *Duka-nipāta* (*Jātaka* II 33–38). The verses of this *jātaka* were transmitted independently as the popular *Mora-paritta*.⁵ Line 1.1 of the inscription is from verse 1bc; line 1.2 is from verse 3a; line 1.3 is from verse 4de. The restored text is as follows:⁶

1a. [udet' ayaṃ cakkhumā ekarājā]

1b. [harissavaṇṇo] (1.1) **pathavippabhāso**

1c. **taṃ taṃ na** [massāmi harissavaṇṇaṃ pathavippabhāsaṃ]

1.d. [tay' ajja guttā viharemu divasaṃ]

3a. (1.2) **apet' ayaṃ cakkhum**[ā] **eka**[rājā]

3b. [harissavaṇṇo pathavippabhāso]

3c. [taṃ taṃ namassāmi harissavaṇṇaṃ pathavippabhāsaṃ]

3.d. [tay' ajja guttā viharemu rattiṃ]

4a. [ye brāhmaṇā vedagū sabbadhamme]

4b. [te me namo te ca maṃ pālayantu]

4c. [nam' atthu buddhānaṃ nam' atthu bodhiyā]

4d. [namo vimuttānaṃ namo] (1.3) **vimuttiyā**

4e. **imaṃ so** [parittaṃ katvā]

4f. [moro vāsaṃ akappayi]

⁵There are some differences in the numbering of the verses in different editions of the *paritta*, depending on whether or not the two introductory verses (not given in the *jātaka* version) are counted. I follow here the numbering in Lionel Lokuliyana, *Catubhāṇavārapāli, The Text of the Four Recitals, or The Great Book of Protections, Sinhala Maha Pirit Pota*, Colombo, n.d., pp. 34–37.

⁶Restored portions are given in plain type within brackets. Preserved fragments are given in bold type.

II. *Maṅgala-sutta*

The second fragment is from the *Maṅgala-sutta*, the fourth sutta of the *Cūla-vagga* of the *Sutta-nipāta* (Sn pp. 46–47).⁷ Lines 2.1 and 2.2 are from the prose introduction (*nidāna*); line 2.3 gives the complete text of verse 3cd, and line 2.4 gives most of verse 6cd. The missing portions may be restored as follows:

Nidāna: [ekam samayaṃ bhagavā sāvatthiyaṃ viharati jetavane] (2.1) **anāthapi**[ṇḍikassa ārāme...ekam antaṃ tithā kho] (2.2) **sā devatā bhagavantam gāthāya a**[jjhabhāsi]...

3ab. [patirūpadesavāso ca pubbe ca katapuññatā]

3cd. (2.3) **attasammāpanidhi ca etaṃ maṅgalam utamaṃ(!)**

6ab. [dānañ ca dhammacariyā ca ñātakānañ ca saṅgaho]

6cd. [anavaj]- (2.4)-**jāni kammāni etaṃ maṅgalam u**[uttamaṃ]

III. *Ratana-sutta*

The third fragment is from the *Ratana-sutta*, the first sutta of the *Cūlavagga* of the *Sutta-nipāta* (Sn pp. 39–42). Lines 3.1–2 give most of verse 3; lines 3.3–4 give most of verse 15abc (or 16abc)⁸ and a fragment of line 17d, the last verse. The text may be restored as follows:

⁷I refer here to the numbering of verses in the PTS edition of the *Sutta-nipāta*.

⁸Since the first three lines of vv. 15 and 16 are the same, the lines might come from either verse. The first three lines of v. 17 are also the same, but I assume from the dotted line in Aung Thaw's text that there is a break with missing text, which rules out v. 17.

(3.1) *siddham*

- 3a. *yaṅkiṃ*[ci vittam i] *dha vā huram vā*
 3b. *saggesu vā yaṃ ratanam paṇitam*
 3c. *na* [no samam] (3.2) *att[h]i*⁹ *tathāgatena*
 3d. *idaṃ pi buddhe ratanam paṇitam*
 3e. *etena saccena su*[vatthi ho]tu

- 15a. (3.3) *yānidha bhūtāni* [samāgatā]ni
 15b. *bhummaṇi vā yāni vā antalikkhe*
 15c. *tathāgataṃ* (3.4) *devamanussapūjitaṃ*
 15d. [buddhaṃ namassāma suvatthi hotu]

- 17a. [yānidha bhūtāni samāgatāni]
 17b. [bhummaṇi vā yāni vā antalikkhe]
 17c. [tathāgataṃ devamanussapūjitaṃ]
 17d. (3.4) *saṅghaṃ namassāmi* (!) [suvatthi hotu]

The inscription seems to give an excerpt from the *Ratana-sutta*, rather than a complete text. The *siddham* at the beginning suggests that the text opened with verse 3 of the sutta. From verse 3 the extant text jumps to the end of the sutta. In the absence of any plates, or a more scientific description of the stone, it is impossible to say how much of the sutta was included in the inscription.

⁹ The *atti* of the printed text might be a misprint for *atthi*, the *ta* and the *tha* being similar in Burmese script.

Several other Pāli inscriptions are known from the area.¹⁰ Aung Thaw (*Historical Sites*, p. 32) notes that “these documents by themselves suffice to establish the fact that Theravāda Buddhism was flourishing early at Śrīkṣetra”.

Nandapuri

Peter Skilling

¹⁰ See Aung Thaw, *Historical Sites*, pp. 31–32; Nihar-Ranjan Ray, “Early Traces of Buddhism in Burma”, *The Journal of the Greater India Society*, Vol. VI-1 (January, 1939), pp. 41–49; U Tha Myat, *Pyu Reader*, Rangoon, 1963; and G.H. Luce, “The Advent of Buddhism to Burma”, in L. Cousins *et al.* (ed.), *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner*, Dordrecht and Boston, 1974, pp. 125–27, cf. also H. Falk in J. Stargardt : *The Oldest Known Pāli Texts*. *JPTS* XXI, 1995, pp. 199–217.